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Message Text

SECRET

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22-12
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /078 W
---------- 019116
R 240750Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9200
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHNANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
USLO PEKING

S E C R E T DACCA 6356

NOFORN

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MILI, BG
SUBJ: TENSION WITHIN MILITARY CONTINUES

REF: DACCA 6336

1. THE FRESH CRISIS IN THE BANGLADESH ARMY APPEARS TO CONTINUE UNABATED. MANY OFFICERS HAVE REPORTEDLY TAKEN THEIR FAMILIES FROM THE CANTONMENT FOR SAFETY. WHILE THEY HAVE APPARENTLY RETURNED TO DUTY EACH DAY, THEIR APPRECIATE OF THE PRESENT LEVEL OF UNCERTAINTY HAS LED THEM TO LEAVE FAMILIES WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIONS IN THE CITY FOR THE TIME BEING.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GENERAL ZIA CONFERRED PART OF
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YESTERDAY WITH ALL OFFICERS WHOM HE URGED TO KEEP THEIR

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JCO'S (JUNIOR COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, WHO STAND BETWEEN REGULAR OFFICERS AND NCO'S) AND ENLISTED MEN UNDER CONTROL. OFFICERS REPORTEDLY TOLD ZIA THAT THEY ARE VERY UNCERTAIN OF THEIRABILITY TO REASSERT CONTROL UNLESS THE UNFULFILLED PROMISES RE ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES ARE MET, AND THIS THE OFFICERS ASSERTED IS SOMETHING ONLY ZIA CAN DO. MEANWHILE, ZIA IS SAID TO BE DEALING DIRECTLY HIMSELF WITH THE LANCERS IN EFFORT TO FIND SOME ACCOMMODATION. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT HE AS AGREED TO THE RETURN OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL FAROOK RAHMAN BUT HAS CAREFULLY LEFT THE DATE VAGUE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE LANCERS ARE UNYIELDING IN THEIR DEMAND THAT FAROOK BE BACK BY THE END OF DECEMBER.

3. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT ZIA IS NOW IN TROUBLE, AND THAT THE CONFRONTATION WITH THE LANCERS IS SIMPLY THE MOST DRAMATIC--AND PRESSING-ELEMENT IN THE PROBLEMS HE CONFRONTS. WE ARE TOLD THAT RESENTMENT OVER THE UN-FULFILLED PROMISES RE ECONOMIC GRIEVANCES IS WIDELY HELD. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE CAMPAIGN TO ROUND U THE JAWANS WHO COMMITTED UNLAWFUL OR DILOYAL ACTS ON AND AFTER NOVEMBER 7 (SEE DACCA 6277) HAS HAD TO BE HALTED--OR, AT LEAST, TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED. ZIA IS REPORTED TO BE THE FOCUS OF CRITICISM FOR THE ARMY'S POOR SHOWING IN TANGAIL (DACCA 5088) AND AT HALUAGHTAT WHERE IT PROVED LESS COMPETENT THAN THE PARA-MILITARY BANGLADESH RIFLES (BDR). ADDITIONALLY, ZIA REPORTEDLY HAS ASKED CHIEF OF DENFENSE STAFF, MAJOR GENERAL KHALILUC RAHMAN, THE SENIOR-MOST BANGALESE OFFICER TO RETIRE, AN ACTION WHICH HAS ADDED TO THE SENSE OF INSECURITY AMONG THE OFFICER CORPS. MUCH OF WHAT WE HEAR SOUNDS LIKE THE GATHERING OF JACKALS, HOWEVER, AND ZIA'S CONTROL MAY YET BE FIRM. NEVERTHELESS, HIS COURAGE AND NERVE ARE APPARENTLY BEING TESTED. (FOR ZIA'S COMMENTS SEE DACCA 6355.)
CHESLAW

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